

# Introduction

There are numerous information sources available to the public, but these tidbits of knowledge are often scattered throughout City and county booklets, library pamphlets, and the brains of many individuals. The purpose of this book is to consolidate as much of this information about Belmont and local services as possible and to create a general information resource for residents that is easy to use.

A book like this is by nature incomplete, and invariably will be out of date as soon as it is published. However, the goal is to maintain this book as a reference for years to come and to make it available on the City's web site, keeping the information as up-to-date and comprehensive as possible.

The City Council and staff hope you find this booklet helpful!

Questions or suggestions regarding this booklet should be sent to the City Manager's office at 595-7408 or email [cmanager@ci.belmont.ca.us](mailto:cmanager@ci.belmont.ca.us).

## Acknowledgments

*In addition to City staff, the following contributed to this document:*

- *Alcoholics Anonymous*
- *Belmont Park Boosters*
- *Center for Independence of the Disabled*
- *Cities of Foster City, Millbrae, San Bruno, San Carlos, and San Mateo*
- *Human Investment Project*
- *Mid Peninsula Water District*
- *Pacific Gas & Electric*
- *Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center*
- *San Mateo County Government Services Offices*
- *South County Fire Protection Authority*
- *Council Member Dave Warden, who created the first version of the book.*



## Disclaimer

We have tried to ensure that all of the information presented in this book is accurate as of the date it was printed. HOWEVER, the City of Belmont does not take any legal responsibility for any problems caused by the accuracy of information contained herein.

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## Airport Noise



### What can I do about the noise from the airport?

If you are concerned about noise from jets and large commercial planes, you can call the **San Francisco Airport Noise Abatement Center** at (650) 876-2219 and file a formal complaint. For small plane noise issues, you can call the **San Carlos Airport** at (650) 573-3700.

## Alcoholism



### Does Belmont have an AA chapter? Where and when do they meet?

Belmont's **Alcoholics Anonymous** (AA) meetings take place at the Good Shepherd Church, in the Parish building, at 1300 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. General meeting times are Mondays at 7:30pm; Tuesdays at 12 noon; Thursdays at 7:30pm; and Fridays at noon and 6:00pm. In addition, there are women's group meetings on Friday at 5:30pm and on Saturday at 5:00pm. There is also a youth group meeting on Friday at 7:30pm. You can call (650) 573-6811 for further information and updated meeting times.

Family members coping with alcohol addictions can call **Al-Anon** at (650) 873-2356.

## Animals, Domestic (see Pets)



## Antennas



### How large a rooftop antenna can I put on my house?

Without a permit, a roof-mounted antenna cannot exceed nine feet in height or four feet above the highest roof elevation, whichever is less. Ground-mounted antennas cannot exceed 12 feet in height and shall not be visible from the public right-of-way. Any antenna taller than this height requires a conditional use permit. For any specific questions, please contact the Belmont Permit Center at (650) 595-7416.

### Can I install a satellite dish on my property?

Without a permit, dish-type antennas cannot be greater than six feet in diameter nor seven feet in height, and must be installed on the ground. Any satellite dish larger than this requires a conditional use permit. There are also property line setback requirements, and the dish should not be visible from the public right-of-way. For further information, call the Belmont Permit Center at (650) 595-7416.

## Banner Policy



### Can I hang a banner advertisement across Ralston Ave.?

City or city-sponsored events are given "first priority" for use of the banner poles. Belmont affiliated organizations are given "second priority" for use of the banner poles. No banners will be used to advertise a business or a product. All applications must be made in writing on the Temporary Banner Permit Application form available in the Permit Center.

Contact the Permit Center at (650) 595-7427 for more information or to find out about construction specifications and insurance requirements.

# Building / Construction



## **I need to hire a contractor for a building project.**

### **Where should I start?**

Ask your friends and neighbors about positive experiences they have had with various contractors. Also, see if your local neighborhood association maintains a list of recommended contractors. (See the **Neighborhoods** section)

Contact the **Peninsula Builders Exchange**, a non-profit, member-run organization, for a referral. You can call them at (650) 591-4486 or see them on the web at <http://www.constructionplans.org/index.htm>.

Make sure that you deal only with LICENSED contractors. Call the Contractors State License Board at 1-800-321-2752 to verify any information provided by the contractor. Have the contractor's name, license number, and business address handy when you call.

Try to get bids from at least three different contractors on a job. Be sure to ask for references of work that the contractor has completed in the local area. Make sure you get a written contract, and don't sign it until you fully understand all the terms.

## **Does the Belmont Permit Center have building plans for my house?**

### **Can I get a copy?**

The City has a folder on file for nearly every developed lot in Belmont. This folder should contain copies of all permitted improvements made to the property. Sometimes, especially for older houses, there are no plans, the plans are outdated or incomplete, or some of the work may not have been done with the proper permits: in such cases, the plans would not appear in the file.

No copies can be made of any plans without written permission from the architect. For more details, call the Permit Center at (650) 595-7416, or stop by the counter during normal business hours at City Hall.

## **Does Belmont teach any classes to help with remodeling projects?**

Yes! The City of Belmont usually gives an owner/builder class once a year for people who would like to know more about the building and remodeling process. For further information, call the Permit Center at (650) 595-7422.

## **I want to build a new house or add onto an existing house in Belmont. What do I have to do?**

**1. The Project Concept.** A developer, property owner, or business has an idea to construct or remodel a building in Belmont. At this point, there may be lots of questions about the zoning designation of the property in question, whether a use permit is required, and whether design requirements are a factor for the project. The place to start is the City's Permit Center, where staff can provide the information you need and answer your questions.

**2. Pre-application Meeting.** Prior to the submission of a development application, staff in the Permit Center is available to meet developers/owners to discuss project plans in conceptual form and to provide general information and direction regarding application submittal requirements. This gives potential customers the opportunity to obtain information about the review process, realistic estimates of the time involved, and tips for minimizing delays.

**3. Development Application.** An application, which includes the building design, a site plan and a landscape plan, is submitted to the Permit Center. A city planner is then assigned to the project, and the application is sent out to various departments for review and comment.

**4. Referral Review.** After staff has had an opportunity to review the development application, the project planner meets with department representatives to discuss their comments, issues, and recommended conditions of approval for the project. More information and plans may be requested from the applicant based on the results of the various departments' and divisions' review.

**5. Staff Report and Public Hearing.** The project planner writes a staff report about the project including the planning concerns and conditions of approval. Staff recommends in the report whether the application should be approved or denied, based on whether the proposed project meets the City's requirements and policies. The application request is then scheduled for a public hearing before the Planning Commission or the City Council. At a public hearing the applicant is provided an opportunity to address the Commission or Council. Also, all neighbors within 300 feet of your property are notified by mail of your project and may make comments at the Public Hearing. Certain applications can be approved without a public hearing by the Planning Director.

**6. Construction Plans Submittal.** Once the project has been approved, a building permit application and construction plans are submitted to the Permit Center for review. Other permits may also be necessary from the Fire Authority, Engineering Division of public works, the County Health Department, etc.

**7. Project Plan Check.** City plan checkers in the Permit Center review the construction plans for compliance with building codes. Plans also may be routed to other departments for their review and comment. Plans will be checked against any project conditions of approval established by the Planning Commission or the City Council in a public hearing. The plan check process may take from one day to several weeks, depending on the complexity of the project. You will be notified within 30 days of the status of your permit request. In some cases you may wish to submit plans for plan check before your project is approved in a public hearing. In this case, you do so at your own risk.

**8. Permit Issuance and Construction Inspections.** No construction is permitted without the required permits. During construction, periodic field inspections are made to insure that the project is being constructed in compliance with the approved plans and the applicable codes. Construction is permitted only between the hours of 8am and 5pm Monday through Friday, and 10am and 5pm on Saturday. No construction is permitted on Sundays or holidays.

## **I have heard about “Design Review”—what is it?**

Every new residential structure, or any residential addition of more than 400 square feet of gross floor area is subject to Design Review by the Belmont Planning Commission. This means that a public hearing is scheduled for the project, and all neighbors within 300 feet are notified by mail and may make public comment on the design of the new house or the addition, and how it may affect their own homes and their neighborhood. The design review submittal must also include a “neighborhood outreach strategy” for contacting your neighbors and informing them of the project prior to the planning commission public hearing.

Most projects requiring design review have been approved as originally submitted, with some cases requiring minor modifications. Many times, the project is improved as a result of the design review. Factors that the Planning Commission looks at include floor area, building bulk, exterior and roof materials, total amount of grading, drainage, landscaping, parking, siting, and potential view obstructions. For further information, contact the Permit Center at (650) 595-7416

## **How high a fence or retaining wall can I build?**

See the answer to this and other permit-related questions in the **Building Permits** section.



# Building Inspections

## **How much notice is required for a building inspection? Where do I call to schedule an inspection?**

Building inspections can generally be scheduled for the next 1 or 2 business days, although more notice is always better both for you and for the City. The City of Belmont has a better than 99% track record of servicing building inspections on the date that they were requested. For further information or to schedule an appointment, call the Permit Center at (650) 595-7422.

# Building Permits

## **What types of construction in Belmont require a building permit?**

Most anything that you can possibly think of requires a building permit from the City. It's much easier to list things that DO NOT require a permit:

- Fences 6 feet tall or shorter. Fences and retaining walls are limited to 3 ½ feet in height in the front yard when your property is within 40-feet of a street intersection.
- Retaining walls 4 feet tall or shorter, measured from the bottom of the footing or post to the top of the wall. All retaining walls that support a surcharge require a permit, regardless of height.
- Painting and wallpapering
- Walks and driveways NOT more than 30" above grade, and NOT above a basement or story
- Free-standing sheds less than 120 square feet
- And a few other things like water tanks and oil derricks!

In general, any mechanical or structural work (like cabinets, doors, windows, roofs, etc.), plumbing work (sinks, toilets, irrigation, water heaters, etc.), or electrical work (appliances, furnaces, garage door openers, pool pumps, etc.) requires a building permit. If you have any questions about a project, please call the Permit Center at (650) 595-7422.

REMEMBER—building permits ensure that any work done in your home is done PROPERLY, for health and safety reasons, and will save you time and money in the long run when you sell your home.

## **Do I need a permit to...**

### **... install or reface my kitchen cabinets?**

You do not need a permit to reface your cabinets. You do need a permit to replace them.

### **... replace my water heater?**

Yes. If you pay a plumber to do the job, he would also normally get the permit.

### **... replace my roof?**

Yes. If you pay a roofer to do the work, he will generally get the permit.

### **... add or replace a fence?**

If the fence is 6 feet tall or shorter, you do not need a building permit. In addition, no fence, wall, or hedge can exceed 3-1/2 feet in height when located in a front yard that is within 40 feet of a street intersection. This is to provide a line of sight for cross traffic. Also, you cannot build your fence too close to the street in the city's right-of-way without an encroachment permit (see **Encroachments**).

### **... build a retaining wall?**

If the retaining wall is 4 feet tall or shorter, you do not need a building permit. (See fence/retaining wall height limitations when located in the front yard under “Building Permits” – page 7). However, as with fences, you cannot build a retaining wall in the city’s right-of-way without an encroachment permit (see **Encroachments**). The height of the wall is measured from the bottom of the footing or post to the top of the wall. All retaining walls, regardless of height, that support a surcharge require a building permit.

### **... replace a furnace?**

Yes; the heating/furnace contractor generally should get it for you.

### **... install a pool, a spa, or a hot tub?**

Prefabricated swimming pools that are 5,000 gallons or less, whose walls are entirely above grade (i.e., Dough-Boy™-style, above ground pools) do not require a permit. Hot tubs, spas, and in-ground pools that need plumbing and electrical work DO require building permits, unless they are entirely self-contained units. Call the Permit Center at (650) 595-7422

### **... build a greenhouse or a tool shed?**

Single-story buildings that are NOT attached to other buildings, not exceeding 120 square feet (including the roofline), do not need a permit. Above 120 square feet, contact the Building Division at (650) 595-7422. In addition, City setback and maximum allowable floor area requirements may apply. Please contact (650) 595-7416 for further information.

### **... enclose part of my yard?**

When you enclose or cover part of your yard, you are in effect increasing the square footage of your living space. This requires a building permit. If the square footage then exceeds 400 square feet, design review approval will also be required. See the question on “Design Review” and the “Planning and Building process” question in the **Building / Construction** section.

### **... connect to the city storm drain system?**

Yes, you will need an encroachment permit. See the **Encroachments** section, and call (650) 595-7425.

### **Can I use a credit card to pay for building fees and permits?**

Yes. The City accepts cash, check, Visa and Master Card.

## **Buses**



### **What bus lines run in Belmont? Where are the bus stops?**

The San Mateo County Transit District (“SamTrans”) bus can be reached for up-to-date schedules and rates by calling at 1-800-660-4287, or check out their web site at <http://www.samtrans.com>.

As of this writing, the **TX**, **PX**, and **KX** express lines run through Belmont on El Camino Real. The **260** line runs through Redwood Shores, Sterling Downs, Notre Dame de Namur University, and Carlmont Shopping Center to Continentals/Cipriani. The **262** local line runs from Carlmont Shopping Center and the Belmont Library, the Carlmont apartment area, Cipriani, Notre Dame to Middle to Davey Glen; then on El Camino Real to Ralston to Hiller and Down Old County Road to Hillsdale Shopping Center and 31<sup>st</sup> Ave. For more details, you can pick up maps for most of the bus routes from Belmont City Hall (located at One Twin Pines Lane, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor), or by calling SamTrans at 1-800-660-4287.



# Business



## **I'm interested in starting a business in Belmont. What should I do?**

The Belmont Chamber of Commerce can get you a **Starting Business Kit** for around \$30. They have kits for Sole Proprietors, Partnerships, Limited Liability Companies, and Corporations. These kits contain all the legal documents and government forms that you need for starting the business and for tax purposes throughout the year. Call the Belmont Chamber office at (650) 595-8696 for further information and other helpful advice. You can also check out the website for these business packages at <http://products.calchamber.com>. *A business license will also be required – see below.*

## **Where is the Belmont Chamber of Commerce? What do they do?**

The Belmont Chamber of Commerce is located on the ground floor of City Hall at 1070 Sixth Avenue, Suite 105. The Chamber provides many resources for new and existing businesses, including grand-openings, fund-raisers, and business mixers. The Chamber hosts the annual William Chapman Ralston award ceremony, an annual installation and business awards dinner, and an annual Christmas fund-raiser. The Chamber also publishes a monthly newsletter, maintains a website of its members, and also functions as an advocacy group for businesses in and around Belmont. You can reach the Chamber of Commerce from 9:00am to 1:00pm, Monday through Friday, at (650) 595-8696.

## **Can I get a listing of all the businesses in Belmont?**

This information is available through the City of Belmont's Finance Department. You can also print the list of all of the businesses in Belmont that currently hold valid business licenses yourself from the Belmont website at [www.belmont.gov](http://www.belmont.gov). For a more current list, the Finance Department can provide you with either an electronic or a paper list and this costs approximately \$35. Call (650) 595-7436 for further details.

# Business Licenses and Permits



## **How do I get started?**

You can begin by contacting the City at (650) 598-4204. The applications instructions are available on our website at [www.belmont.gov](http://www.belmont.gov). Once you have completed the application, you may bring your application to the Permit Center for approvals. Depending on the location of your business, you may be required to obtain approvals from both South County Fire and the City. Once you have obtained the required approval(s), you may bring your approved applications to the Finance Department and pay the Business License Tax. The Finance Department will process your application and issue your license.

## **How do I operate a business from my home in Belmont?**

You cannot have a business that increases traffic (either cars or pedestrians), or involves any retail sales (except mail order), nor can you display any signs. All of your business must take place in a fully enclosed building, and you must also obtain a business license. There are other restrictions as well. For further details, call the Permit Center at (650) 595-7416.

All businesses operating for profit in San Mateo County are also required to file a Fictitious Business Name Statement within 30 days of opening. Forms for this purpose may be obtained and filed at the County of San Mateo Recorder's Office at 555 County Center, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, in Redwood City, (650) 363-4212. To obtain a sellers permit, you can contact the State Board of Equalization at **1-800-400-7115**.

## **How do I renew my business license?**

You will get a renewal notice automatically in the mail from the Belmont Finance Department however, it is the responsibility of the Business Owner to pay the tax and renew their business license. If the business license tax is not paid in a timely manner a 25% penalty will be assessed, which may go up as high as 100% of the business license tax.

## **I want to sell door-to-door in Belmont. What do I do?**

First, you need to complete an application for a Solicitor's Permit and bring it to the Police Department. The Police Department will conduct a background investigation and fingerprinting. Non-profit applications will be sent to the City Attorney for review. The process takes approximately 30 days to complete.

For further information, contact the Belmont Police Department at (650) 595-7400.

## **How do I get a Massage Business License?**

You must contact the Police Department at (650) 595-7400.

## **Can I use a credit card to pay for my business license?**

Yes. The City accepts cash, check, Visa and Master Card.

## **Cars (see Parking and also Traffic)**



## **Code Enforcement**

### **How do I report graffiti that I just saw on Belmont public property?**

As a community, we need to deal with graffiti as soon as it appears. The only way to discourage graffiti is to paint it out immediately. Many people associate graffiti with the general decline of an area, even if it is not true. Belmont merchants can lose business because potential customers feel that the area is not safe. If the graffiti is on City-owned property, call the Public Works Department at (650) 595-7427. Private property owners are responsible for removing graffiti on their property.

### **My neighbor's house is a real eyesore—peeling paint, trash in the front yard, weeds, etc. What can I do about it?**

There are three ways to report possible code enforcement violations. The first is to call the City Code Enforcement Officer at (650) 637-2968. If you wish to remain anonymous, you can call the anonymous hotline at (650) 610-5743. The third way is to do it by E-Mail. The E-Mail address is [codeenforcement@ci.belmont.ca.us](mailto:codeenforcement@ci.belmont.ca.us)

One of Belmont's highest priorities is to preserve and maintain our neighborhoods. A strong code enforcement program has been shown to reduce crime and improve property values. The general "hierarchy" of code enforcement cases are: 1) Health and Safety, 2) On-going Enforcement, and 3) General Welfare. Here are SOME general property maintenance items that are prohibited in Belmont (this is certainly not a complete list):

- Overgrown grass, weeds, and vegetation
- Trash visible from the public right-of-way
- Broken appliances, furniture, boxes, empty cartons, toys, etc.
- Discarded building materials
- Trash cans stored such that they are visible from the public right-of-way
- Clothes lines in front yards

The City of Belmont recognizes the need for confidentiality for people who file complaints, and also understands that flexibility is needed in code enforcement activities when violators are elderly or infirm.

More information on the City's code enforcement program is available on the Community Development page of the City's website at [www.belmont.gov](http://www.belmont.gov) or by calling (650) 637-2968.

## **My street has beat-up cars parked on it that never seem to be used. What can I do about them?**

Belmont has an ordinance within the city that a vehicle must be moved every 72 hours (3 days) at least 1/10 of a mile. Only currently registered and fully operable vehicles (cars, boats, etc.) can legally be parked on the street. For more detailed information, see the section on **Parking** in this guide.

## **Commissions**

### **Does the City have Commissions?**

Yes! The City has three commissions that provide advice to the City Council.

- The **Finance Commission**: nine members appointed to three-year terms. The Finance Commission meets the first Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. and participates in the budget review process, serves as the audit committee for the City Council, conducts an annual review of the City's investment policy and at the request of the City Council evaluates proposals, programs and contracts for long and short term financial consequences.
- The **Parks and Recreation Commission**: Nine members total, 7 members over age 18 appointed to two-year terms, 2 youth members appointed to one-year terms. The Parks and Recreation Commission meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. and makes recommendations to the City Council on matters pertaining to Belmont's Parks and Recreation programs.
- The **Planning Commission**: seven members appointed to three-year terms. The Planning Commission meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. to review and take action on planning applications and to make recommendations to the City Council. Candidates must be electors of the City of Belmont.



The City Council generally interviews for commission appointments in the winter for terms that begin in March.

To be considered for an upcoming vacancy please contact the City Clerk's office at (650) 595-7413, or go to the Clerk's page on our website at [www.belmont.gov](http://www.belmont.gov).

## **Deer**

(see **Wild Animals**)

## **Disabled Services**



### **What local support services are available for people with disabilities?**

There are many public and private agencies that provide help and services to disabled individuals. Here are but a few to contact for a greater depth of information:

The **Center for Independence of the Disabled** provides support services and information for disabled adults and their families. They are at 875 O'Neill Avenue in Belmont, (650) 595-0783.

The **National Rehabilitation Information Center** offers abundant resources for rehabilitative aids and equipment for disabled people. Call them at 1-800-346-2742.

The **San Mateo County Commission on Disabilities** can be reached at (650) 573-2580 or on their website at [www.smco-cod.org](http://www.smco-cod.org).

Services for the disabled 18 years and older can get help and information from the **Aging and Adult Services TIES Line** at 1-800-675-8437.

**Community Information Program** offers a Guide to Community Resources as well as various other help and contact information. Their website is [www.plsinfo.org/community/cip/index.htm](http://www.plsinfo.org/community/cip/index.htm) and can be reached by phone at (650) 595-7950.

**Meals on Wheels** provides hundreds of daily meals to homebound people with disabilities. Besides providing basic nutritional needs, the program helps prevent premature institutionalization. Applicants must be unable to prepare their own meals and have little or no assistance to obtain adequate meals. The cost of each meal, preparation, and delivery comes from a variety of resources; an anonymous donation is requested but eligible applicants will not be denied service if they cannot give a donation. For more information call (650) 295-2173.

**Redi-Wheels** provides curb-to-curb transit services for qualified individuals. To become a member of the program, call 1-800-660-4287. To make a reservation for a ride, call (650) 348-8112.

The **California Telephone Access Program** can provide products and services to make the telephone easier to use, no matter what your needs are—including amplifiers, large button phones, speaker phones, visual displays, etc. All are available free of charge! To find out how you can qualify, call 1-800-806-1191.

## Dogs (see Pets)



## Demographics



### How many people live in Belmont?

The Federal government conducts a census every 10 years. The 2000 census put the Belmont population at 25,123, and the 1990 census put the Belmont population at 24,127.

### Where can I get detailed Belmont demographic information?

The Belmont City Clerk's office has a variety of Belmont demographic information, such as mean household income, ethnic breakdown, and various other statistics. Stop by the City Clerk's office in Belmont City Hall, or you can access the U.S. Census Bureau website at <http://www.census.gov>.

## Earthquakes/Emergencies



### What should I do during an earthquake?

If you are **INSIDE**, stay inside. Get under a desk or table, or stand in a doorway. Stay away from windows and from any object that might fall on top of you.

If you are **OUTSIDE**, stay outside. Get out into the open, away from buildings, trees, utility poles, and power lines.

If you are **DRIVING**, pull over to the side of the road, stop, and stay in your car. Do not park under an overpass, under power lines, or near utility poles, trees, signs, or large buildings.

### How should I prepare for the next earthquake?

There are a number of specific things that every family should do to prepare for the next inevitable earthquake. A number of excellent pamphlets are available from San Mateo County, PG&E, the Belmont Library, and several other sources. A short, essential list of things you should do includes the following:

- Know how to turn off the gas, electricity, and water to your home.
- Make sure your water heater is strapped to the wall.
- Don't hang heavy pictures or mirrors over beds.
- Secure tall, heavy furniture that could fall over—bookcases, china cabinets, etc. Avoid hanging plants in heavy pots. Don't place breakables and heavy objects on high shelves.
- Store flammable liquids safely—in a shed or garage, away from ignition sources.
- Consult with an architect or engineer about earthquake improvements to your house.
- Have basic emergency supplies on hand—portable radio, water, first-aid kit, flashlights, batteries, and blankets.
- Pick an out-of-town friend or relative to act as a point of contact in case family members become separated and cannot contact one another.

Schools/day care facilities should have an emergency plan. Talk to the responsible people there and know what it is. You will then know how/where to safely pick up children.

Create a Family Plan – You may not be together when a disaster happens, so plan how you will make contact and review what you will do in different situations. For more information, go to: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

## Encroachments

### **How can I get an encroachment permit? Why do I need one? What do they cost?**

The Belmont City Code governs the use of the public right-of-way by individuals. The Department of Public Works is authorized to issue an encroachment permit, which allows construction work within the public right-of-way. This type of work includes driveway approaches, property line cleanouts, parking pads, and curb drains.

For use of any non-standard material (pavers, bricks, etc.) in a driveway approach, the property owner must execute an Administrative Permanent Encroachment Agreement, recorded by the City Clerk with San Mateo County. The agreement obligates the property owner to replace the non-standard material should it be necessary for the City to do work in this area.

For construction of a retaining wall, stairway, fence or any similar structure within the public right-of-way, Council approval is required. To make a positive finding for such a permit, the Council should be able to confirm the following:

- That there is some public benefit to the encroachment—such as added off-street parking spaces, sidewalks, safer site distances from intersections, etc.
- That the encroachment will not unduly restrict travel in the public right-of-way.
- That the city will be protected from liability for injury or property damage.
- That the performance of all the conditions and requirements of the permit will be guaranteed by the posting of a bond with the city.

You can pick up a permit application for an encroachment permit at Permit Center, in City Hall. The phone number is (650) 595-7427, and the master fee schedule is available under Finance Department on the City's website – [www.belmont.gov](http://www.belmont.gov).

# Facility Rentals



## What types of rental facilities are available from the City?

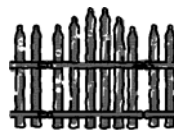
The Belmont Parks and Recreation Department has a total of five facilities that can be rented for meetings, parties, weddings, and other functions:

- **The Twin Pines Senior and Community Center** is a beautiful, modern, multi-use facility located in picturesque Twin Pines Park. Taking advantage of natural light, the Center is open and inviting. The Center is ideal for wedding receptions, seminars, parties, and organizational meetings. The facility offers a large banquet room that can comfortably seat 200 people for dining. The Center also has the capability to reduce the banquet room to half for smaller functions. Offering a large, full-service kitchen, the Center is excellent for catered events. The adjacent patio presents a number of possibilities for an outside social event. Designed in a Mediterranean style, the Twin Pines Senior and Community Center is one of the city's most versatile and attractive facilities.
- **The Twin Pines Lodge** is one of the park's oldest buildings, and has recently been renovated. Located next to a winding creek, the Lodge offers country charm amid lush greenery. Ideal for intimate receptions, parties and meetings, the Lodge can accommodate 50 to 100 people. Parties of 70 can enjoy the rustic main room while gatherings of 100 can be seated on the patio area. The Lodge has a kitchen, tables and chairs for 100 people, indoor sound capabilities and the versatility for either an indoor or outdoor event. For weddings, many have held their ceremony on the patio and then the reception inside.
- **The Twin Pines Cottage** is a small building at the back of the park that was saved from demolition in the 1970's by the Cottage Auxiliary group. This richly historical building holds 30 people and is ideal for small meetings, luncheons, baby showers or social events.
- **The Belmont Sports Complex Conference Center** is located at 550 Island Parkway east of Highway 101. This new facility can accommodate private parties, meetings, conferences, and training opportunities for up to 125 people.
- **The Barrett Community Center** is located at 1835 Belburn Drive. This multi-use facility currently accommodates adult activities and education, a day care program, and the Belmont Community Players.

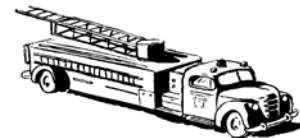
For rental information for any of the above facilities, contact the Parks and Recreation Department at (650) 595-7441.

In addition to the facilities mentioned above, the **Twin Pines Park Group Picnic Area** may be reserved. The picnic area is located at the west end of Twin Pines Park and features a large barbecue area, serving tables, drinking fountains, and a children's playground area.

## Fences (see Building Permits)



## Fire Department Information



### What should I do if I smell burning or a strange smell in my house or yard?

Call South County Fire Department at (650) 593-8016; or, if you think it's an emergency, call 911! The Fire Department gets several calls every month from people who detect an odd smell in their homes. It may be a gas leak or some other dangerous vapor. The Fire Department has a special "sniffer" gadget that can detect many different types of odors and whether or not they are harmful. So don't take any chances, call if you smell something funny.



## **What do I do if I see smoke or a fire?**

Call 911! Immediately!

## **What types of fire extinguishers should I have, and how many fire extinguishers should I have in my house?**

You should install a fire extinguisher in every room that poses a potential fire hazard: the kitchen, the garage, any living space with a fireplace, and any workshops. Mount the fire extinguishers on a wall 3 ½ to 5 feet above the floor. The location should be near the room's exit or escape route.

Fire extinguishers are categorized by ratings (A, B, C) that determine the size and type of fire that the extinguisher can successfully put out. An "A" type fire is primarily wood, paper, and fabric; "B" type fires are primarily grease and oil based; and "C" type fires are electrical in nature. The number preceding the A, B, or C rating determines what size fire the extinguisher can put out. For example, a 10B:C extinguisher would be able to handle a 25-square-foot fire of either oil or electrical origin. A 5B:C extinguisher could handle a 12.5 square-foot fire that is oil or electrical based.

Get a good B, C fire extinguisher for the kitchen; and a good A, B, C extinguisher for the garage and the other living areas. Make sure you have at least one fire extinguisher on every level of your house, including the basement.

## **Where should I place smoke alarms in my home? How many smoke alarms do I need?**

You should install a smoke alarm inside each bedroom as well as in the main corridor or hallway outside each bedroom area. You need to install a minimum of two alarms even in single-level homes. You should also install a smoke alarm above the stairwells.

Ideally, mount the alarms in the middle of the ceiling. If that isn't possible (because of a light fixture, etc.), then mount the alarms on the wall at least three feet away from any corner and 4 - 6 inches away from the ceiling. Keep smoke alarms away from drafts created by fans or air ducts, since moving air can blow smoke away from the sensor. Also, avoid placing smoke alarms too near the kitchen stove or bathroom shower.

## **What should I do if I see or smell smoke, smell a chemical release, or witness a potential medical emergency?**

Call 911, the emergency telephone number for the South County Fire Authority.

## **What should I do if I witness an actual fire, a chemical release, a medical or similar emergency?**

Call 911, the emergency telephone number for the South County Fire Authority.

## **What should I do if I witness something I believe is a fire hazard in a building where I work, shop, or reside?**

Contact a building representative first. If your communication with this responsible party does not result in the successful resolution of your concern(s), contact the South County Fire Authority's Prevention and Education Division at (650) 802-4255. You will confidentially be asked for your name and telephone number should a fire inspector need to follow-up with you. Sorry, anonymous reports cannot be accepted.

## **What should I do to protect my family and my residence from the ravages of fire?**

1. Install smoke detectors inside each bedroom, in the corridor or hallway area serving the bedrooms, and at the top of each stairwell, if your residence is not already so equipped.
2. Regularly test your smoke detector(s) to ensure their proper operability.
3. Install a 2A/10BC portable fire extinguisher to combat small fires involving ordinary combustibles, flammable/combustible liquids, and energized electrical equipment. The

preferable location to mount portable fire extinguishers is on a wall, 3.5 to 5 feet above the surface of the floor, near an exit or escape route.

4. Clear combustible vegetation 30 feet to 100 feet away from your residence or to the property line, whichever is closest;
5. Develop and practice an emergency escape plan involving all the occupants of your residence.
6. Ensure that ordinary and/or special fire hazards don't exist on your property.

## Flood Zone

### What flood zone am I in?

Residents with the City of Belmont are either in Flood Zone A (flood insurance is required), Flood Zone B (flood insurance is optional), or Flood Zone C (flood insurance not needed).

To request a copy of the current flood plain map, please call the Department of Public Works at (650) 595-7425.

For more information please call FEMA (415) 923-7177 during regular business hours, or visit their website at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

### Where can I get sandbags to prevent flooding of my property?

Public Works provides a limited supply of filled sandbags for residents. The sandbags may be picked up outside the Corporation Yard (110 Sem Lane in Belmont) under covered shelter, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## Garage Sale (see Recreation)

## Garbage/Recycling



### Who provides for Belmont's garbage pick-up?

The City contracts with BFI to provide garbage and recycling services. They have an informative website at [www.bfipeninsula.com](http://www.bfipeninsula.com) that should answer most garbage questions. They can also be reached at (650) 592-2411.

### Do I have to put my trash and recycling at the curb?

Yes. However, BFI will pick up waste containers from the porch, backyard, or side yards of residents who are frail or are medically disabled. Please contact BFI at (650) 592-2411 to arrange this.

### How do I get a dumpster delivered?

Call BFI at (650) 591-2025 or email [debris.box@bfi.com](mailto:debris.box@bfi.com) to schedule a pickup and delivery of the box. Call for current pricing information. The box needs to be placed on your property. If this is not feasible, you may be able to obtain an encroachment permit from the City to temporarily place it in the street.

### How can I get a yard waste container? How can I get RID of my yard waste container?

Every residence in Belmont is entitled to a yard-waste cart. If you don't have a cart, or if you want to get an extra one, call (650) 592-2411. Additional carts can be purchased for \$60 or rented for \$3 a month. You may also call to have the cart removed if you don't want or use it. Even though the 96-gallon cart seems rather large, most people end up needing that size. However, BFI will swap out the 96-gallon cart for a 64 or 32-gallon cart if you request it at (650) 592-2411. Also, you cannot use the cart for garbage, only for yard waste.



## **When is my trash pickup day? When is my recycling day?**

Trash pickup is every Monday and recycling and yard waste pickup is every other Monday. Please set container out by 6:00 a.m. on your collection day. For the most up-to-date information, check BFI's website at [www.bfipeninsula.com](http://www.bfipeninsula.com), or call BFI at (650) 592-2411.

## **What can I recycle, and what should I throw in the trash?**

You would be amazed at what you can recycle!

**Some things that can be recycled:** Newspapers, junk mail, cereal boxes, tissue boxes, egg cartons, catalogs, magazines, phone books, paperback books, paper bags, wrapping paper, cardboard, glass bottles, jelly jars, cosmetic jars, plastic soda bottles, water bottles, shampoo bottles, plastic bags, soda cans, aluminum foil, batteries, motor oil, and MORE! How many of these objects are you putting in the garbage can?

**Some things that have to go into the trash:** Freezer boxes with wax coatings, milk cartons, hardcover books, pizza boxes with food in them, plastic or metal jar lids and caps, light bulbs, dishes, plastic plates and eating utensils, stretch wrap, plastic toys, hardware, food scraps, yogurt, butter, and sour cream tubs.

For a complete and updated list, check BFI's website at [www.bfipeninsula.com](http://www.bfipeninsula.com), or call BFI at (650) 592-2411.

## **What am I not allowed to place in my trash?**

Hazardous waste (paint, solvents, asbestos, etc.), building materials (concrete, sand, etc.), rocks, and dirt cannot be placed in the trash. Call BFI at (650) 592-2411 for further information.

## **Is it OK to put anything other than storm water in the gutters, catch basins and storm drains?**

**NO!** Everything that goes into the Belmont gutters, catch basins and storm drains eventually flows into our creeks and the bay. The State government has ordered cities to make sure that only storm water goes into the bay. Please make sure that storm water, and NOTHING ELSE, flows into the Belmont storm drains!

## **Geography / Geology**



### **Where can I get a map of Belmont?**

You can get a street map of Belmont from the Chamber of Commerce (1070 Sixth Avenue, Suite #105) for two dollars. And for a fee, you can get a large (3 by 4-foot) precinct map of Belmont from BPS Reprographics at 1100 Industrial Road #13, in San Carlos, or a Belmont Zoning or Belmont Geological map from the Permit Center.

### **What elevation is Belmont?**

Belmont's elevation varies from 10 to 750 feet above sea level.

### **Where is City Hall?**

Belmont's City Hall is located at One Twin Pines Lane, near Ralston Avenue.

# Government



## Who is in charge of Belmont? How do I contact them?

The City of Belmont is a general-law city, guided by the laws of the State of California. Belmont has a Council-Manager form of government, with the City Manager acting as chief administrator who reports to a five-member elected City Council. One of the Council members sits as Mayor each year. You may contact any member of the City Council or the City Manager directly if you have a concern, complaint, or a compliment. Call the City Clerk's office at (650) 595-7413 for more information. Key City phone numbers can also be found on the back cover or on the City's website at [www.belmont.gov](http://www.belmont.gov).

## Where and when does the Belmont City Council meet?

The Belmont City Council meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 7:30pm the Council Chambers located in Belmont City Hall at One Twin Pines Lane. Meetings are televised on Channel 27. You can view the agenda and minutes at [www.belmont.gov](http://www.belmont.gov) and even sign up to have them automatically emailed to you!

## In what political district is Belmont?

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisor representatives for the City districts are Jerry Hill and Rich Gordon. Supervisor Jerry Hill can be reached at (650) 363-4568; and Supervisor Rich Gordon can be reached at (650) 363-4569.

Belmont is in the **8<sup>th</sup> State Senate District**, currently represented by **Jackie Speier**. Senator Speier's office number is (650) 340-8840 and her FAX number is (650) 340-1661.

Belmont is in the **19<sup>th</sup> State Assembly District**, currently represented by **Gene Mullin**. Assembly member Mullin's office number is (650) 341-4319 and his FAX number is (650) 341-4676.

Belmont is in the **14<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congressional District**, represented by **Anna Eshoo**. Her office phone is (650) 323-2984 and her FAX line is (650) 323-3498.

And, of course, our **U.S. Senators** are **Barbara Boxer**, at (415) 403-0100, and **Dianne Feinstein**, at (415) 393-0707.

## When are the Belmont local elections held?

Belmont holds its local elections in November on odd-numbered years. Of the five-member elected City Council, three are open in 2005, and two in 2007.

The City Clerk and City Treasurer are elected offices that have four-year terms; their offices are also up for election in 2007.

# Graffiti (see also Code Enforcement)



## Where does the graffiti come from? Who does it?

Most graffiti is done by youths from pre-teens to early 20's. Because most "taggers" like their peers to recognize their work, most graffiti is done by those who live nearby. Although many people believe that graffiti signals the presence of gangs, less than 10% of all graffiti nationwide is gang-related.

## What can I do about graffiti?

Remove any graffiti immediately and continuously from your property. Vandals will realize that their time and paint is being wasted and will move on. Keep your property well lit, clean, and landscaped. Encourage Belmont businesses to clean up any existing graffiti on their property. Report any graffiti on Belmont public property to the Public Works Department at (650) 595-7427.

No person owning a building or vehicle in Belmont shall allow any graffiti to remain on his or her property when the graffiti is visible from the street. Such graffiti can be reported to the Belmont Police Department's Traffic and Graffiti Hotline at (650) 595-7455.

## Historical

### **Does Belmont have a History Museum?**

Yes! It's located at the rear of the Manor House in Twin Pines Park. It is open on the second and fourth Saturday of each month from 1:00pm to 4:00pm. The Belmont Historical Society also holds the museum open during the Sunday Summer Concert series, during the Belmont Art & Wine Festival, the Holiday Craft Fair, and other annual city events. You can call the History Museum directly at (650) 593-4213 or email at [belmontcahistory@aol.com](mailto:belmontcahistory@aol.com).

### **How can I find out more about Belmont history?**

You can see a great "virtual" historical tour of Belmont on the web at <http://www.belmont.gov/hist>. You can also visit the History Museum at Twin Pines Park (see above) and speak with the docents at the museum. The Belmont Library (1110 Alameda de las Pulgas, in Belmont) has a nice collection of Belmont history-related reference material, books, and pamphlets to check out. A great book to start with is "A History of the Wooded Hills"—it's available at the Belmont Library or at the museum.

### **When was Belmont incorporated as a city?**

Belmont was incorporated on the election of October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1926, as a city of the sixth class.

### **How did my street get its name?**

Most people know the story of "Alameda de las Pulgas" (avenue of the fleas) and "El Camino Real" (the kings highway)—but there's also a reason behind every other street name in Belmont. The Belmont Historical Society has been working on "Name that Street", a compendium of Belmont street name origins. If you want to help, call the Belmont Historical Society at (650) 593-4213.

### **Are there any resources for researching my family's history?**

Yes! The **San Mateo County Genealogical Society** is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization that teaches people about genealogy and helps them research their family lines. They have thousands of books and reference materials available at 25 Tower Road in San Mateo. The group meets at Central School (525 Middle Road) each month; they publish a newsletter and conduct several seminars a year. You can reach them at P.O. Box 5083, San Mateo CA 94402.

## Housing



### **What sort of housing is available in Belmont?**

Belmont has studio, one and two bedroom apartments; condominiums; and everything from small 800 square foot to large 3500+ square foot houses. Rents and sales prices vary considerably. There are also several short-term housing options, including the Holiday Inn Express and Summerfield Suites hotels.

### **Does Belmont have a financial program to assist homebuyers?**

Yes! The Belmont City Council, through the Belmont Redevelopment Agency, is sponsoring a program to provide down payment assistance to qualified low-to-moderate income homebuyers in Belmont. The assistance is a long-term, low-interest loan for down payment funds. The payment of the loan is deferred for 30 years or until the home is sold. Here are some of the eligibility requirements:

- You must be a first time homebuyer in Belmont or you must currently work in Belmont (and have worked in Belmont for the last two years), and you must not currently own a home.
- You must be able to qualify for a mortgage loan from a private lender.
- You must have sufficient assets to pay a minimum 5% down payment and closing costs required by the primary lender.
- You must remain the owner/occupant during the term of the down payment loan.
- Your total assets (stocks, cash, etc.) must not exceed \$125,000.
- Your annual gross household income does not exceed the limits established by HUD for the current calendar year. See the Permit Center for details.

This is a great opportunity for low-to-moderate income families to purchase a home in Belmont. For more information, please call the Permit Center at (650) 595-7417.

## **Are loans available for low-income homeowners that need to make repairs or upgrades on their homes?**

Yes, the City of Belmont offers both an Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Assistance Loan and a Multi-Family Rehabilitation Assistance Loan. For further information about the City of Belmont housing rehabilitation loan programs, please call the Permit Center at (650) 595-7416.

The San Mateo County Human Services Agency also offers a variety of programs to low-income homeowners and investors who rent to low-income families. For further information about the San Mateo County housing rehabilitation loans, please call the County Housing and Community Development Department at (650) 802-5050.

## **My rent is very high! Does Belmont have rent control?**

No, Belmont does not have rent control. The market economy determines the prevailing rental rates for housing in the city.

## **I have heard about “homesharing”—what is it?**

Homesharing is an arrangement whereby two or more unrelated people share a residence, which could be a house or an apartment. This is a program sponsored by the **Human Investment Project**, through funding provided by San Mateo County.

The HIP facilitates two types of living arrangements—match or service exchange. In a match arrangement, the home provider is matched up with a seeker who pays rent. In a service exchange, a home seeker agrees to provide services to the homeowner in exchange for rent.

Homesharing reduces costs, promotes independence, and provides increased security for both parties. To arrange for an interview, call the Human Investment Project at (650) 348-6660.

# **Hydrants**



## **What do the different colors on the hydrants mean?**

Due to the fires in the Oakland Hills, the State of California has mandated that cities identify the flow capabilities of their hydrants in a uniform manner. This is so that firefighters who may be called in from other areas to fight fires can easily identify the hydrants. All the hydrants are painted white to stand out in the dark. The tops and sides of the hydrants are then painted red, orange, green, or blue to denote the gallons per minute flow capability:

- Red top - below 500 gallons per minute
- Orange top - 501 to 1000 gallons per minute
- Green top - 1001 to 1500 gallons per minute
- Blue top - over 1500 gallons per minute

## **Am I allowed to draw water from a Belmont fire hydrant?**

Yes. The Mid Peninsula Water District will loan you a hydrant water meter for an \$800 deposit. Then you pay a \$57 service charge and \$1.88 per unit of water that you use. One unit of water is approximately 750 gallons. Upon return of the meter, your \$800 deposit will be refunded. Call the Water District at (650) 591-8941 for further information.

## **Library**



### **Where is the Belmont Library? When is it open?**

The Belmont Library is located at 1110 Alameda de las Pulgas in Belmont. They can be reached at (650) 591-8286. The Belmont Library is open from:

- 10:00am to 9:00pm Monday through Wednesday
- 10:00am to 6:00pm Thursday and Friday
- 10:00am to 5:00pm Saturday
- 1:00pm to 5:00pm Sunday

Plans are underway for a new, larger library at the same location. **The Library is temporarily closed as of August 9, 2004.** Construction has begun. Unfortunately, funding is not available to finance a temporary library, so the library will be closed until construction is completed, on or about early Spring of 2006.

The building will include approximately 20,000 square feet, featuring specially designed areas for children, teens and adults; quiet areas for reading; individual and group study rooms; a spacious community meeting room; an open marketplace area for browsing books, CD's and DVD's; a variety of comfortable seating and table arrangements; wireless access to the Internet throughout the Library; multi-person computer work stations; a small café and many more parking spaces than the current library offers. Settled among Belmont's beautiful trees and nestled in the midst of Belameda Park, the new library will be spacious, modern and inviting!

The Belmont Library is a member of the Peninsula Library system—your Belmont library card gives you access to all the public and community college libraries in San Mateo County.

You can also access the Peninsula Library System on the web at all hours at <http://www.plsinfo.org>. You can browse the online catalog, reserve the latest bestsellers, renew books, search for magazine articles, reserve videos, and check your library record.

### **Can I renew books after the library is closed?**

Yes! You can renew library items 24 hours a day by calling (650) 638-0399.

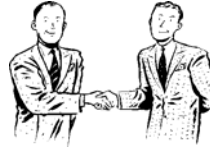
### **What facilities are at the Belmont Library?**

In addition to children's and adult books, the library has newspapers, magazines, cassettes, CDs, videos, books on tape, business directories, consumer materials, tax forms, community information, and publicly available computers with access to the Internet. And more!

### **Can I donate books to the Belmont Library?**

The Library does not accept book donations; however, the Friends of the Belmont Library organization runs a "booknook" at the Twin Pines Park Cottage, 7 Cottage Ln. They accept book donations to raise money for library programs. If you have donations, please call (650) 593-5650, 591-3261, or 591-6329 and speak to a volunteer. Please, no textbooks, magazines, encyclopedias, dictionaries, or Reader's Digest books. The "booknook" is open 12-4 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of every month at the Cottage in Twin Pines.

# Neighbors / Neighborhoods



## **What are the neighborhood groups in Belmont? How can I join?**

Joining a Belmont neighborhood organization is a great way to get involved with people who live in your local area. Neighborhood Associations hold meetings, have parties and BBQs, publish newsletters, and function as advocacy groups for their constituents before Belmont City staff and the Belmont City Council. Here are the larger neighborhood associations:

- **Belmont Heights** Civic Improvement Association (Hallmark and Bellcrest Gardens)
- **Central** Neighborhood Association (North of Ralston, between Alameda and El Camino)
- **Cipriani** Neighborhood Association (streets off Cipriani, between Alameda and Ralston)
- **Farallon** Homeowners Association (East Belmont, near Summerfield Suites)
- **Homeview** Neighborhood Association (South of Ralston, between 101 and El Camino)
- **McDougal** Neighborhood Association (streets off Chula Vista and El Verano)
- **Plateau-Skymont** Neighborhood Association (streets West of Cipriani and North of Ralston)
- **Sterling Downs** Neighborhood Association (North of Ralston, between 101 and El Camino)
- **Western Hills** Neighborhood Association (streets off of Hastings Drive)

The Belmont website ([www.belmont.gov](http://www.belmont.gov)) has contact information for the neighborhood associations.

## **I cannot seem to get along with my neighbors! We cannot agree about his floodlights, parking, parties, etc. What can I do about it?**

If you can't seem to work things out with your neighbors, call the **Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center** at (650) 373-3490. The PCRC is an independent, non-profit organization that provides FREE basic mediation for Belmont residents. Not only can they help with a variety of neighbor problems—such as noise, pets, parking, trees, and fences—but also with other issues such as landlords, tenants, employers, businesses and customers, and families.

Instead of fighting or going to court, a panel of mediators will listen to both sides of the issue in question. They will not take sides, but will assist you and the other party in finding a mutually satisfactory resolution. Try it, it works! 80% of disputes brought to mediation are settled, and 90% of the mediation agreements are upheld.

## **My neighbor has lots of weeds and trash in his yard. What can I do about it?**

Garbage that can be seen from the street is a public nuisance. This includes not just trash but car parts, old furniture, etc. Not only does this make the neighborhood look bad, but it's also a fire, rodent, and wildlife hazard. First, try to talk to your neighbor; if this proves unsuccessful, you can report the problem to the city's code enforcement officer at (650) 637-2968. All information will be kept confidential.

## Noise



## **Are there any time/day restrictions on gas-powered equipment?**

Yes. Gasoline powered maintenance equipment may only be operated from 8:00am to sunset on weekdays, and from 10:00am to sunset on weekends and holidays. For violations call the Belmont Police Department at (650) 595-7400.

## **Are there time restrictions on construction noise?**

Yes. All construction and related activities that require a city building permit are only allowed from 8:00am to 5:00pm on weekdays, and from 10:00am to 5:00pm on Saturdays. No construction activities are allowed on Sundays or holidays. For violations, the Belmont Police Department Non-Emergency phone number (650) 595-7400.

## **Parking**



### **My neighbor has an old, beat-up car, boat, or RV parked in front of his house and it looks terrible. What can I do about it?**

**FOR PARKING ON THE STREET**—Belmont has an ordinance within the city that a vehicle must be moved every 72 hours (3 days) at least 1/10 of a mile. Only currently registered and fully operable vehicles (cars, boats, etc.) can be parked on the street. Parking on many of our streets is very limited, and is far too valuable for storing inoperable vehicles.

**FOR PARKING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY**—Only vehicles that are registered, and that can be legally operated on a California highway can be parked outside of a fully enclosed garage. Parking must be on paved or surfaced areas—not on dirt or lawns!

**REMEMBER**—Beat-up, inoperable cars are a sign of BLIGHT and give the message that people don't care about their property. This invites crime and lowers property values. It hurts the neighborhoods and the city.

To report a complaint, call the Police Department's Abandoned Vehicle Hotline at (650) 595-7455.

### **My neighbors keep parking in front of my house! What can I do?**

There is no law requiring people to park their own cars in front of their own houses. Any legally registered, operable vehicle may be parked on the street in the public right-of-way. However, everyone seems to appreciate it if people keep their cars parked on or in front of their own property.

### **What should I do if my vehicle has been towed?**

If your vehicle was towed by the Belmont Police, you must go to the Department and pay a release fee of \$30. Then, go to the appropriate towing company and pay the towing and storage fees. If the vehicle was towed for an expired registration, you must also bring proof of current registration.

You must possess a valid California Driver's License if you will be driving the vehicle away after paying the towing fees.

### **Can I work on my car in front of my house?**

You can only perform routine maintenance or emergency repairs outdoors. Minor repairs may be made in your driveway as long as the car is registered to the address where the work is taking place or registered to the person who is doing the work. Please be sure not to let materials flow into the storm drain system. All other repairs must be done in an enclosed garage. Work cannot be done in the public right-of-way and storage of vehicle parts within public view is prohibited.

### **I want to construct more parking in front of my house. How do I go about doing this?**

Since you will most likely be constructing your parking in the public right-of-way, you will need an encroachment permit from the city before you do any work. For further information, call the Belmont Permit Center at (650) 595-7427 and see the **Encroachments** section in this book.

## **There are so many cars parked on both sides of my street I can barely drive past them! Is there anything I can do about it?**

Cars parked on the street should not interfere with emergency vehicle access, like fire trucks and ambulances. If you can't get your car through, the emergency vehicles probably can't get through either! Please ask your neighbors to move their cars. For further information, call the Police Department at (650) 595-7400.

## **Parks**



### **Where are parks in Belmont?**

A list of all parks and recreational areas in Belmont is available on the Parks and Recreation Department page of the City's website ([www.belmont.gov](http://www.belmont.gov)).

### **Where can I barbecue in Belmont parks?**

Here are most of the barbecue locations in Belmont:

- **Belmont Sports Complex** (550 Island Parkway, East of Hwy 101) – several BBQ pits
- **Twin Pines Park** (Twin Pines Lane) – several BBQ pits
- **Alexander Park** (Yorkshire Way in Sterling Downs)
- **Belameda Park** (1110 Alameda, next to the Belmont Library)
- **Cipriani Park** (Buena Vista at Monserat in Cipriani)
- **O'Donnell Park** (Ralston Avenue at Irwin Street in Homeview)

### **Does the city have a dog park?**

Yes! The Cipriani Dog Park is a fenced, off-leash dog park located next to Cipriani School on Buena Vista Avenue. The park has been in existence since 1992, thanks to a group of dedicated dog lovers who gave their time, money, and love to ensure that our dogs will have a place of their own! **The Belmont Bowser Club** was formed in 1992 to keep the public informed about the Cipriani Dog Park and to assist with improvements to the park. The email address for the Belmont Bowser Club is [sdierolf@usa.net](mailto:sdierolf@usa.net).

### **There is a hazard in a public park. Where do I report it?**

Call the Parks and Recreation main office at (650) 595-7441. If it's after hours, and a serious concern, call the Public Works Department Emergency Service number at (650) 595-7400.



## **Permits (see Building Permits and Encroachments)**

## **Pets**



### **Do I need a license for my dog? How do I get one?**

All dogs must have a current rabies vaccination, must wear a collar with their license number attached, and should be on a leash at all times when they are out in public. Call the San Mateo County Animal Licensing Department at (650) 363-4220. You can also purchase a dog license at the Peninsula Humane Society at 12 Airport Blvd. in San Mateo.



### **Do I need a license for my cat?**

Yes, in Belmont, and many other local communities, you do.

### **How many dogs or cats can I have in Belmont?**

You may have up to four dogs, or four cats, or any combination of dogs and cats such that they total no more than four. If you feed or give a cat water, legally it is yours, even if you never allow it inside your house.

### **Does Belmont let me keep... Chickens? Horses? Goats?**

You may keep domestic fowl, such as chicken, goose, duck, turkey, pigeon, dove, and squab. You must apply for a special permit from animal control services, and all such animals must be confined in a coop or shed at all times. Also, the coop or shed must be 20 feet from all streets, all lot lines, and all dwellings. No rooster over four months old is permitted.

Horses, cows, and goats may be kept on one-acre parcels, limited to 2 animals per acre. There are also setback provisions from houses and streets for the stable or corral. With a conditional use permit, horses, cows, or goats may be kept in a pasture of more than two acres.

### **Does Belmont have a dog park?**

Yes! See the **Parks** section for more information.

### **There's a dog running loose in my neighborhood. What do I do?**

If you don't feel completely comfortable approaching the dog to check for tags and to call the owner, then call the Peninsula Humane Society Animal Control Services at (650) 340-8200. Approach any dog you don't know with extreme caution or not at all.

### **My neighbor's dog keeps barking. What can I do about it?**

Excessive, continuous, or untimely barking is a public nuisance. It is against the law for a dog owner to fail to exercise proper care of the animal. If you can, try talking to your neighbor (see **Neighbors**). You can also call the Police Department at (650) 595-7400 and they will attempt to take care of the problem. Habitual cases may result in the animal being impounded.

### **People in my neighborhood do not pick up after their dogs. What can I do?**

Dog owners are required to immediately pick up their dog's messes at all times. People should be "prepared" to clean up after their dog when they take it for a walk. If there is a habitual problem with "dog doo" that you just can't resolve, please call the Belmont Police at (650) 595-7400.

### **A dog just bit someone in my family. Where do I call?**

Report the dog bite immediately to the Belmont Police Department at (650) 595-7400. After an investigation, the officer may contact the County Department of Health or the County Animal Control Program.

### **Where can I adopt a dog or a cat?**

Call the Peninsula Humane Society at (650) 340-8200 or visit them at 12 Airport Boulevard in San Mateo. They have dozens of pre-screened, healthy, adoptable animals anxious for a good home. In addition to dogs and cats, they also have rabbits, rats, hamsters, and a variety of other animals.

## **Phone Numbers (see last page)**

# Police Information



## **Where is the Belmont police station? When is it open?**

The Police Department is located at One Twin Pines Lane, within Belmont City Hall. The lobby hours are from 8:00am to 8:00pm Monday through Friday.

## **I hear a noise in my yard or inside my home. What should I do?**

Call 9-1-1 immediately! Stay put, and stay on the phone. Don't go wandering around. The police will get there as soon as possible. The dispatcher on the telephone will tell you what to do. Follow their instructions.

## **I've just received a traffic ticket. What do I do?**

When you get a traffic ticket, the Officer will explain the citation and then will ask you to sign it. The citation will have all of the pertinent information on it, including: the date and time of the violation, your name, the offense you're being cited for, the location of the offense, the Officer's name, and applicable court dates and information. If you need further information, you can call the Central Branch County Traffic Court at (650) 573-2622.

## **How do I report a concern I have over a recent contact with a Belmont police officer?**

You may file a formal complaint via a form you may obtain at the Belmont Police Department office at One Twin Pines Lane. Once the department receives the complaint, you will be contacted by a police supervisor. The supervisor may be able to resolve the issue with you; if not, the supervisor will investigate the complaint and you will be notified of the results in writing by the Chief of police.

You may also call the Supervisor's Information line at (650) 595-7407. Leave your name and phone number and a supervisor will return your call. This will afford you a direct avenue to personally discuss any suggestions or concerns.

## **What's the procedure for claiming property that I found and turned into the police station?**

If the property goes unclaimed for 90 days after you turn it in to the police, you can claim the property under the following conditions:

- (1) If the property has a value of \$250 or more, the police department will publish a description of the property at least once in the newspaper. If after seven days the owner fails to claim the property, and the person who found the property pays for the cost of the publication, the property shall vest in the person who found the property.
- (2) If the property has a value of less than \$250, the property shall vest in the person who found the property.
- (3) There is a 120-day (vs. the 90 day) waiting period for bicycles.
- (4) The above does not apply to items that are illegal to own, and does not apply to guns!

## **I need to get fingerprints taken for work...or, I would like to have my child fingerprinted. When can I do this?**

The Belmont Police Department can fingerprint you or your child on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from the hours of 10:00am to 10:30am at the Belmont Police Station at One Twin Pines Lane. They charge residents \$15 for this service. Call (650) 595-7400 to confirm the times and days. By appointment only.

In addition, the Belmont Kiwanis Club has a Child Safety ID day in the Fall, and will provide you with fingerprints and a current picture of your child at no charge. For further information, call Herb Nieman at (650) 591-4372.

## **Are there any support services for victims of violent crimes?**

Yes. The San Mateo County Victim Center is a division of the San Mateo County Probation Department. They can offer advice and act as a liaison between the victim and the criminal justice system. They can provide information as to the progress of the case through the criminal courts and can assist the victim in filing claims with the California State Board of Control to seek reimbursement for lost wages or lost support. For further information, give them a call at (650) 877-5494. They have a very small office; be prepared to leave a message and they will return your call within 24 hours.

## **What are my responsibilities for having a home alarm system?**

### **What will the Belmont police do when my alarm goes off?**

First, you need to get a permit for your alarm from the Police Department. It is a misdemeanor to use an alarm system in Belmont without a permit. All audible alarms must be installed or activated to automatically cease transmitting the audible signal within ten minutes. A user or a representative should respond within one hour to the premises upon the request of the Police Department.

Telephone dial alarms must not call the emergency line of the Police Department. Instead, use the business number at (650) 595-7400. The holder of the alarm permit has a responsibility to instruct all persons who use the alarm system in its proper function to avoid false alarms.

An alarm system shall constitute a public nuisance if it activates false alarms MORE THAN TWO TIMES during a permit year. In violation of this rule, the following actions may be taken:

- With the third false alarm during a permit year, a permittee shall be required to compensate the city for its response, and shall be billed \$50.00.
- With the fourth false alarm during a permit year, a permittee shall be required to compensate the city for its response, and shall be billed \$75.00.
- With the fifth false alarm and any and all subsequent false alarms, the permittee shall be required to compensate the city for the total cost of its response and shall be billed \$100.00.
- More than five (5) false alarms in a one-year period and the alarm permit shall be revoked.

Note that all of the above information does NOT apply to car alarms. No permit is required for alarms in your vehicle, and no penalties are issued for false alarms. HOWEVER, if your car alarm is activated and does not shut itself off, it becomes a public nuisance, and the police might tow your car!

## **Recreation**



### **Where can I get information about Recreation classes offered by Belmont?**

The Belmont Parks and Recreation Department publishes an activity guide three times each year — Fall, Winter/Spring, and Summer. A copy of the guide is mailed to all Belmont residents. You can also pick up a current copy at the Parks & Recreation main office, in Twin Pines Park at 30 Twin Pines Lane, and is available on the City's website ([www.belmont.gov](http://www.belmont.gov)). In addition to a Pre-School Program and After School sports activities, there are classes in Tennis, Dance, Crafts, Cooking, Fitness, Sports, and Health, as well as General Enrichment classes. There are also a host of activities for seniors—see the **Seniors** section.

### **When and where do I register for classes?**

You can register by mail, beginning with the delivery of the activity guide. Belmont residents are processed in the order received; non-resident registrations are held for a short time before processing them. You may also register in person at the Parks and Recreation main office up until the time that classes begin. You can pay with a credit card! Call (650) 595-7441 for more information.

### **When is the Belmont Art & Wine Festival?**

The Belmont Art & Wine Festival is held the third weekend in September in Twin Pines Park, from 10:00am to 6:00pm on Saturday and 10:00am to 5:00pm on Sunday. In addition to wine and beer, there are food booths, information tables, entertainment, and of course original artwork and crafts for sale by numerous artists. For further information, call the Belmont Parks and Recreation Department at (650) 595-7441.

### **Does Belmont have an ice skating rink?**

Yes—Belmont Iceland is located at 815 Old County Road, near Masonic Way. Their hours vary quite a bit, due to hockey and various special events, so be sure and call before you go: (650) 592-0532. Generally, they are open Monday through Friday mornings, Saturday and Sunday afternoons, and Saturday evenings.

### **Does Belmont have a community swimming pool?**

The Parks and Recreation Department offers swimming lessons and recreational swimming every summer. See the Belmont Summer Recreation Activity Guide, or call the Recreation Department at (650) 595-7441 for location, times and rates.

### **Does Belmont have a skateboard park?**

No, not at the present time. For further updates or information, call the Parks and Recreation Department at (650) 595-7441.

### **Does Belmont have tennis courts? Where are they located?**

The tennis courts in Belmont are located at the following parks:

Alexander Park on Yorkshire Way

Hallmark Park on Hallmark Drive

Carlmont High School at 1400 Alameda de las Pulgas

### **Does Belmont have a rock climbing gym?**

The old Belmont theatre is now a rock climbing gym called Planet Granite! For information, they can be reached at 591-3030.

### **Does the City sponsor an annual Garage Sale?**

Yes! The City facilitates an annual community garage sale day for residents. The event is usually in August. Check the information in the Summer Recreation Activity Guide or call the Recreation Department at (650) 595-7441 for more information.

### **What kind of hiking trails/open space does Belmont have?**

Belmont has an extensive trail and open space system. Best known is Water Dog Lake, but there are many others. A hiking trail map can be picked up in City Hall or in the Recreation office. Call 595-7441 for more information. You can also view this map on the Park and Recreation Department page of the City's website at [www.belmont.gov](http://www.belmont.gov).

### **Does Belmont have a Farmer's Market?**

Yes! Beginning in the spring each year, it is held on Sundays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the South Caltrain Parking lot on El Camino Real. The Farmer's Market usually runs from May through late Fall. Call 595-7441 for more information.

### **What other Special Events does the Recreation Department offer?**

Many special events are held throughout the year. Check the Activities Guide, or call 595-7441 for information.

## Recycling (see Garbage/Recycling)

## Redevelopment

“Redevelopment” is a special tool for revitalizing older areas of the City. With its Redevelopment Agency, Belmont takes advantage of favorable property tax formulas; creates partnerships with land owners and developers; and issues bonds to pay for streets, landscaping and infrastructure improvements. Under state law, 20% of all redevelopment funds is spent on affordable housing. Belmont’s “Los Costaños Redevelopment Plan” was created in 1981 to take in all lands east of El Camino Real (including Homeview, Sterling Downs and Island Park), along the west side of ECR and along Ralston Avenue up to Twin Pines Park. Recent projects sponsored by Belmont’s Redevelopment Agency include Belmont Village Center, the Safeway Center, Sterling Point condominiums and the upcoming relocation of the Emmett House.

## Schools



### What schools are located in Belmont?

Belmont has several elementary schools, a middle school, 2 high schools and a university:

- **Acacia School Montessori**, Private, Pre-school & K-5; 2820 Ponce Avenue
- **Armstrong School**, Private/Special Needs, grades 1-8; 1405 Solana Drive
- **Belmont Oaks Academy**, Private, K-5; 2200 Carlmont Drive
- **Central Elementary School**, Public, K-5; 525 Middle Road
- **Cipriani Elementary School**, Public, K-4; 2525 Buena Vista Avenue
- **Fox Elementary School**, Public, K-5; 3100 St. James Road
- **Gloria Dei Lutheran School**, Private, K-8; 2600 Ralston Avenue
- **Merry Moppet Preschool**, Private, Pre-school; 2200 Carlmont Drive
- **Nesbit Elementary School**, Public, K-5; 500 Biddulph Way
- **Immaculate Heart of Mary School**, Private, grades 1-8; 1000 Alameda de las Pulgas
- **Notre Dame Elementary School**, Private, K-8; Notre Dame Avenue near Ralston Avenue
- **Ralston Middle School**, Public, 6-8; 2675 Ralston Avenue
- **Carlmont High School**, Public, 1400 Alameda de las Pulgas
- **Notre Dame High School**, Private, 1540 Ralston Avenue
- **Notre Dame de Namur University**, Private, 1500 Ralston Avenue

The public elementary schools are part of the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District, and can be reached at 637-4800. The public high school is part of the Sequoia Union School District in Redwood City and can be reached at 369-1411.

## Seniors



### What sorts of activities are there for Seniors in Belmont?

Nestled in beautiful Twin Pines Park, the Senior and Community Center is a delightful place to be. A variety of programs and services are available. There is sure to be something to please everyone. The facility is open to the public, with no membership requirements. Please join us!

If you are looking for activities, or just a place to come and visit, the Center is for you. A wide array of programs and services are available. Among the programs available to you are: Classes, health screenings, bingo, health insurance counseling, movies, bridge, exercise programs, foreign language groups, special events and lunches.

The City provides a wheelchair accessible van to bring Belmont residents to and from the Center on Mondays-Thursdays between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. for scheduled activities.

For information about the van, or anything else about senior programs at the Twin Pines Senior and Community Center, please call (650) 595-7444 or look on the City of Belmont's website [www.belmont.gov](http://www.belmont.gov).

The **Belmont Senior Club** has a wide variety of activities, including Bingo, movies, picnics, social events, trips, and more! They are based at the Twin Pines Senior and Community Center at 20 Twin Pines Lane in Belmont. They meet the first and third Tuesday of each month at 10:00am. For further information, call (650) 595-7444.

The **Belmont AARP** Chapter #3046 also hosts a variety of activities, games, trips, and social events. They meet on the second Tuesday of the month at the Twin Pines Senior and Community Center at 10:00am. For further information, call (650) 595-7444.

The **Widows and Widowers** group meets the fourth Wednesday of each month at the Twin Pines Senior and Community Center. For membership information call (650) 595-7444.

## **What local support services are available for Seniors?**

There are many public and private agencies that provide help and support services to Seniors. Here are a few examples of the local services available:

San Mateo County Health Services offers **Senior Peer Counseling**, which is a free one-on-one service for seniors. They offer emotional support and guidance to older adults who may suffer from loneliness, depression, isolation, and the loss of loved ones. There is no set time frame or maximum number of sessions. The client and peer counselor work together until a goal has been achieved, a crisis has passed, or the client no longer wishes to continue. Any adult 55 or older who is a resident of San Mateo County is eligible to receive Peer Counseling. For further information, call the Peer Counseling Coordinator at (650) 573-2716.

**Self-Help for the Elderly** provides local educational, recreation, and supportive services. You can reach them at (650) 342-0822. **Shopping Assistance for Seniors (SASH)** in Belmont matches Seniors with volunteers who will grocery shop for them. Seniors pay when the deliveries are made. Call (650) 595-0783 and ask for the SASH coordinator. **Redi-Wheels** provides curb-to-curb transit services for qualified individuals. Call them at 1-800-660-4287.

**TIES in San Mateo County** provides a 24-hour hotline for Seniors and dependent adults. They can provide emergency shelter, food, and crisis intervention. Call them at 1-800-675-8437.

The **Adult Day Services Network of San Mateo County** is an alliance of licensed Adult Day Service centers that promote independence of seniors. They can offer lower-cost alternatives to in-home support or institutional care. Medi-Cal and other insurance may cover the cost of the services; adjusted rates are based on the ability to pay. Centers are open Monday through Friday; there are Centers in San Carlos, Half Moon Bay, Burlingame, Menlo Park, and South San Francisco. The Center in San Carlos is located at 787 Walnut Street and their telephone is (650) 592-9325.

Finally, the **San Mateo County Commission on Aging** publishes an extremely thorough pamphlet entitled "Help at Home," to assist adults of all incomes to remain in their homes when they are ill or disabled. To receive a copy, call the Community Information Program at (650) 595-7950.

## **Can Seniors in a financial bind use the equity in their homes so that they don't have to move?**

Yes. The **Human Investment Project** has a staff of advisors that can analyze the applicant's financial situation, income needs, and goals. They will explain all the various options, fees, and costs. To qualify, a person generally needs to be at least 62 years old, and own their own home free and clear—or have a very small mortgage balance. The most common option is a Reverse Mortgage, which provides cash advances to a homeowner and requires no repayment until the end of the loan term or until the house is sold. For further information, call HIP at (650) 348-6660.

## Service Clubs

A wide range of clubs are available in Belmont to meet virtually any interest you have. For a current listing of clubs and organizations, and contact information, see the Parks and Recreation Activity Guide, or call the Parks and Recreation Department at (650) 595-7441.

## Sewers

### **I have a problem with my Residential Sewer line. Who should I call for help?**

Between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekdays, you can call the Public Works Department at 595-7427. After-hour or weekend emergency sewer calls should be made to the Police Department at 595-7400, and the Police Department will page Public Works staff to respond.

Sewer fees are based on the winter water use and are billed on the tax roll. Contact the Finance Department for any Sewer Billing issues at (650) 595-7436.

## Sidewalks

### **My sidewalk is in need of repair. What can I do?**

The property owner is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the area from the curb line to the front property line, including the sidewalk and driveway ramp. The property owner is also financially liable for any claims that may arise due to sidewalks in poor condition. An encroachment permit is required for any work undertaken by the property owner or their contractor within the right-of-way.

## Signs

Posting signs on poles, trees, fence, benches, walls or any other structure is prohibited in most circumstances. Most residential signs can be no bigger than one square foot in size. Construction signs are allowed only while construction is in progress with a valid building permit. Please contact the Code Enforcement Officer at (650) 637-2968 to discuss any sign issue.

## Streets

### **There is broken glass or some kind of spill or hazard in the street. Who do I call about it?**

Call the Public Works Department at (650) 595-7427 and they will assess the hazard and take appropriate action.



### **Who do I call about a downed power line?**

Treat any downed power line as if it is "live." **Do not touch or try to move any wires.** Keep all children and animals away from the lines. Report them immediately to PG&E at 1-800-743-5000 and also call 9-1-1 to have trained emergency personnel safely contain the area.

### **How do I report a street light outage?**

Call Public Works at 595-7427. Please state the pole location, pole number if possible, and what is wrong with the light.

## **My street is in terrible condition. How do I get it fixed?**

The Public Works Department has a 5-year plan for repairing streets in the city, based on how the "PCI" (Pavement Condition Index) of your street compares to other streets in the city. To find out where your street falls on the list, call the Public Works Department at (650) 595-7427. If there are dangerous holes or other hazards on the street, be sure to report those separately so the Public Works Department can patch them.

## **Television**



### **How do I get Cable television hooked up on my property? How do I get my Cable TV reception fixed?**

Call Comcast Cable Communications, Inc. at 1-800-945-2288

## **Traffic**



### **There is an unsafe traffic situation on my street. Is there anything I can do about it?**

You can make a suggestion to the City's Traffic Safety Committee at (650) 595-7463. The Traffic Safety Committee meets on an as-needed basis and exists to analyze, make recommendations, and implement suggestions regarding traffic-related issues in Belmont. These issues involve: implementing guidelines for off-street parking on hillsides; ensuring red zones are in place in a particular area; determining if certain posted signs ("No U-Turn," "No Right-Turn on Red," etc.) should be in place; or any other traffic-related problems. These meetings are open to the public. The final decision for many of these issues rests with the City Council.

### **What should I do if I see speeding vehicles on my street?**

You can call the Belmont Police Department at (650) 595-7400 to report vehicles that constantly speed down your street. Try to get a description of the car or truck and preferably have the license plate numbers. They will be entered into the computer and a printout will be given to the patrol officers. Vehicles entered remain on this printout for one month. During this time, the patrol officers will make passing checks of your street.

### **There is a lot of traffic in this city— isn't there anything we can do about it?**

There are a number of alternatives that you might want to consider rather than getting in your car every day and struggling through traffic:

- **Caltrain:** Avoid the 101 traffic between San Francisco and San Jose (see **Trains**).
- **SamTrans:** Check out the network of frequent express and local services (see **Buses**).
- **Carpooling:** Call the Rideshare Agency at 1-800-755-7665 for a free matchlist of potential carpool or vanpool partners.
- **Bicycling:** A great way to exercise and get to work!
- **Telecommuting:** Any chance that your employer will let you work from home?

### **Where can I get carpool help / information?**

You can save thousands of dollars a year by carpooling. To see if there are matches of existing carpools or individuals looking for a carpool, call 1-800-755-7665. Carpooling is very flexible—you can carpool every day, or once a week, or whatever meets your needs. When you carpool, you can also use the diamond lanes and pass the toll booths and freeway congestion throughout the Bay Area.

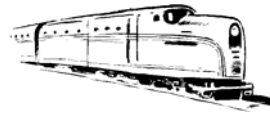


## **I just saw a vehicle with smoke pouring out of the tailpipe—how can I report it?**

Report smoking vehicles at 1-800-EXHAUST. If possible, have the license number, the color and/or make of the vehicle, the date and time, and the location that you saw it.

## **Trails/Hiking (see Recreation)**

## **Trains**



### **Where is the Belmont train station?**

The Belmont train station is up on the elevated portion of the grade separation, just north of Ralston between El Camino and Old County Road. Look for the clock tower!

### **Where does the train go, and how often does it stop in Belmont?**

Commuter service in Belmont is provided by **Caltrain**, and extends from 4<sup>th</sup> and King streets in San Francisco down to San Jose. The entire one-way trip takes about 90 minutes. There are 4 train lines during the week that go as far south as Gilroy. The trip from Belmont to San Francisco takes about 40 minutes. In Belmont, the northbound and southbound trains stop 2-3 times per hour during weekday peak periods, and approximately once per hour during non-peak weekday and weekend periods. You can call Caltrain at 1-800-660-4287 for further information, or you can visit them on the web at <http://www.caltrain.com>. Please be sure to check for updated times and schedule information.



## **Trees**

### **I want to remove a tree from my property. Do I need a permit?**

If the tree is a “protected tree,” then yes, you need a permit. Call the Parks and Recreation Department for further information at (650) 595-7441. If the tree is not a protected tree, then you do not need a permit to remove the tree from developed residential property.

### **What is a “protected tree?”**

This is a tree that is native to, or which has adapted to, climatic conditions of the area, having a trunk diameter of 10 inches or greater measured 4-1/2 feet above the ground. This includes the following species: Oaks, Bay, Buckeye, Monterey Cypress, Redwood, Giant Sequoia, and Madrone. ANY species of tree with an 18-inch diameter trunk (EXCEPT for Acacias, Eucalyptus, and Monterey Pines) is also considered a “protected tree.”

### **Why does Belmont have a tree ordinance?**

Belmont’s trees and open space are part of what makes us unique. In addition, the trees in Belmont prevent erosion and lessen the danger of floods and landslides. Much of the land in Belmont is on some type of slope. There are aesthetic and practical reasons to have regulations that control the removal of protected trees in Belmont in order to retain as many trees as possible that are consistent with the reasonable economic use of private property.

### **I want to trim one of my trees. Do I need a permit?**

If a tree is not a protected tree, then you do not need a permit to perform any trimming. If the tree IS protected, then you may remove up to 1/3 of the crown or foliage of the tree without a permit. If you want to remove more than 1/3 of a protected tree, then a permit is required. Please call the Parks and Recreation Department for further information at (650) 595-7441.

## **One of my neighbor's trees is hanging over the fence in my yard. Can I trim it?**

Generally, you have a right to cut any part of the tree that is over your property, as long as you don't permanently damage the tree. To avoid legal problems, it's best to notify your neighbor (the owner of the tree in question) of your intentions before you do anything, so that your neighbor first has a chance to take care of the problem. If the tree is protected (see above) and you want to trim more than 1/3 of the tree, you will also need to get a tree permit from the City.

## **Where do I apply for a tree permit?**

You can get an application for a permit over the counter at the Parks and Recreation office in Twin Pines Park at 30 Twin Pines Lane. Call the Parks and Recreation office first at (650) 595-7441 since 99% of all tree permit applications can get started over the phone.

# **Volunteers**

## **Does the City of Belmont have a volunteer program? How can I get involved?**

The Belmont Police Department has a volunteer program. For more information, call 595-7400. Also, see more information about serving on Belmont Commissions by looking under the Commissions heading in this book, or by contacting the City Clerk's office at (650) 595-7413. You can also go to the Clerk's page on the City of Belmont website at [www.belmont.gov](http://www.belmont.gov).

# **Water** (see also Hydrants)



## **Where does Belmont city water come from?**

Belmont gets water from the Mid-Peninsula Water District, which buys its water from the San Francisco Water Department. Most of the water comes from Sierra snowmelt and is stored in the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir. Our water is delivered through a series of tunnels and pipes over 150 miles long. Most of Belmont water does not come from the Crystal Springs Reservoir, to most people's surprise!

## **Where can I find my water main shut-off valve?**

Look for the main valve where the water supply enters your house. If you can't find it, the Mid-Peninsula Water District can come out and show you where it is. After you locate the valve, you might want to mark it with fluorescent paint or tape in case you have to find it in the dark.

## **Why is my water bill so high? I don't think I use that much water.**

You might have a leak and not even be aware of it. Locate your water meter—it's usually in a concrete box near the curb of your house. Read the meter first at night, and then again in the morning before any water is used. Subtract the first from the second reading to see if any water has leaked out overnight. If you don't have a leak, call the Water District at 591-8941 and ask them to look at your bill and check your meter. If you do have a leak, you should contact a plumber for repairs.

## **I think I have a leak—what's the first place I should check?**

Check your toilets—they are frequent sources of leaks. Put dye tablets or food coloring in the toilet tank. If color appears in the bowl without flushing, there's a leak that should be repaired.

### **My tap water smells or tastes funny. What can I find out about it?**

Belmont water completely complies with all the US Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Health Services standards and regulations. Sierra water is disinfected with chlorine and undergoes filtration to greatly reduce the level of contaminants. Infrequent odd tastes and odors in water are usually caused by dissolved gases or minerals, and are typically not harmful. If you have any specific concerns, you can call the Water District office at (650) 591-8941.

### **Where can I get my tap water tested?**

The Mid Peninsula Water District tests our water annually, and will gladly provide you a copy of their most recent test results at the District office at 3 Dairy Lane in Belmont. All customers also receive a copy of the report every year between March and October with their water bill. These tests are much more extensive than any tests you would be able to perform yourself.

### **Should I store water for emergencies?**

**YES**—you should store one gallon per person in your family per day to last 3-5 days. If you have 4 people in your family, that's 20 gallons of water to put in storage. Use clean, unbreakable containers, and disinfect the water before storing it. You can use tincture of iodine (12 drops/gallon) or chlorine bleach (8 drops/gallon) as a disinfectant.

### **Does Belmont city water have fluoride in it?**

No. Belmont does not receive fluoridated water from the San Francisco Water Department. Belmont water does have a small amount (0.5 parts per million) of fluoride, which occurs from the erosion of natural deposits.

Beginning the Fall of 2003, Belmont's water customers experienced a change in their drinking water when the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) changed its primary drinking water disinfectant from chlorine to chloramines. Chloramine is a combination of chlorine and ammonia. The conversion will offer an increased protection of public health, while meeting stricter state and federal water quality regulations. As with chlorine, three special groups, specifically kidney dialysis patients, aquarium owners and businesses or industries that use water in their treatment process, will need to remove chloramines from the water prior to use. For more information, visit <http://better.sfwater.org> or contact the water district at (650) 591-8941.

### **Does Belmont city water have lead in it?**

Belmont does not deliver water that contains lead. However, some households acquire lead in their water due to the lead in older, soldered pipe joints.

### **How "hard" is Belmont city water?**

Belmont water has about 40 parts per million (ppm) of Calcium Carbonate, which by most standards is considered "soft."

## **Website**

### **Does the City of Belmont have a website?**

Yes! It is located at <http://www.belmont.gov>, and has recently been completely redesigned!. Please check it out!

# Wild Animals

"If it's not sick or injured, leave it alone" – is a quote from the local Peninsula Humane Society/SPCA.

Nearly a third of all animals the Humane Society/SPCA receives are local injured or orphaned wildlife. Our Wildlife Care Center is one of only a few of its kind in California humane societies or SPCAs. Facilities include raptor and songbird aviaries, a diving pool for sea birds, a duck pond, and mammal enclosures. Orphaned wildlife, such as baby birds, opossum, raccoons and squirrels are hand-fed and raised until old enough to eat and survive on their own. They treat sick and injured wildlife until they are well enough to be released.

**Exotic Species** – Exotic animals also fall under the care of the Wildlife Care Center. Exotic species include birds from small finches to large macaws, and reptiles from tiny lizards to large monitors, caiman and snakes.

**Urban Wildlife** – The SPCA does not trap urban wildlife who "disturb" residences such as raccoons, skunks, opossum or squirrels. Removing an animal from its habitat only opens up the space for another one to move in.

If you see a wild animal in distress, please call the Field Services Department of the SPCA at (650)340-8200. For additional information, contact Susan Kelly at 650/340-7022, ext. 376 or [skelly@peninsulahumanesociety.org](mailto:skelly@peninsulahumanesociety.org)



# Youth Activities

## What types of organized sports are available for my children?

**AYSO**—American Youth Soccer Organization's mission is to develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs that promote a fun, family environment, based on the following five philosophies:

- Everyone Plays—every player on every team must play at least half of every game.
- Balanced Teams—every region at the start of each season should set up teams as evenly as possible.
- Open Registration—the programs are open to all children, ages 5-18, who want to play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only requirements for playing.
- Positive Coaching—coaches make the extra effort to understand and offer positive help to the players, rather than using negative criticism.
- Good Sportsmanship—the program creates a positive environment based upon mutual respect, rather than a win-at-all-costs attitude.

**CYSA** (California Youth Soccer Association) is a more competition-oriented, tournament-focused group—you can reach them at (650) 595-5689.

**Babe Ruth Baseball** was formed to give young players a chance to play baseball on a standard diamond regulation rules. The Babe Ruth League has a 13-15 year old and a 16-18 year old division.

The **Belmont Youth Softball Association (BYSA)** is a non-profit organization comprised of young women and girls who are taught good sportsmanship and leadership through participation in softball.

**Little League Baseball** is for all youngsters between the ages of 5 and 12, including divisions of Tee-Ball (using a batting tee rather than a pitched ball), for players ages five, six, and seven, and a Minor League for all youngsters age seven through twelve.

For more information on any of these great activities for youth, telephone the Parks and Recreation office for current contact information. They can be reached at (650) 595-7441.

### **Is there help to find my kids work during the summer?**

Yes! Call the San Mateo County **Jobs for Youth** program at (650) 301-8492. They offer employment services for youths ages 14-21. Such jobs include: gardening, cleaning, repair work, delivery tasks, and many other activities.

### **What kinds of clubs are available for my kids to join?**

The **Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts of America** are alive and well in Belmont! For information, call (650) 341-5633. You can contact the **Girl Scout** council at (650) 591-6210, and the **Belmont 4-H Club** at (650) 592-0274. For a list of all other clubs and organizations in Belmont, see the Parks and Recreation Activity Guide.

### **What types of classes does the City offer for kids to take?**

See the information presented under the **Recreation** heading. In addition to special youth classes for Math, Gymnastics, Tap, Ballet, and Karate, most of the Adult recreation classes can also be taken by youths and teens.

### **Does Belmont have a curfew for minors?**

Yes. Belmont has a **nighttime** curfew between 11pm and 6am everyday, and also a **daytime** curfew between 8.30am and 1:30pm on days when school is in session. During these times, it is unlawful for any person under the age of 18 to loiter or wander on public streets, parks, playgrounds, or other public grounds, vacant lots, or any unsupervised place within the city limits.



# Useful Phone Numbers

For all police, fire, medical emergencies

**Dial 9-1-1**

## City of Belmont and other Government Offices and Services

Abandoned Vehicle/Traffic and Graffiti Hotline.....	595-7455
Animal Control (Humane Society).....	340-8200
Building Permits .....	595-7422
Business Licenses .....	598-4204
City Clerk .....	595-7413
City Council / Mayor.....	595-7413
City Manager .....	595-7408
Code Enforcement .....	637-2968
Community Development Dept. ....	595-7417
Finance Dept.....	595-7433
Fire Department (non-emergency).....	802-4255
Garbage (BFI).....	592-2411
Job Hotline.....	595-7438
Library .....	591-8286
Parks and Recreation Dept.....	595-7441
Permit Center .....	595-7416
Police Department (non-emergency).....	595-7400
Post Office .....	1-800-275-8777
Public Works Department.....	595-7427
Senior and Community Center .....	595-7444
San Mateo County Mosquito Abatement District.....	344-8592
School Districts	
Belmont-Redwood Shores School District .....	637-4800
Sequoia Union High School District.....	369-1411
Water District .....	591-8941

## General Information and Other Resources

Aircraft Noise Complaints (San Carlos Airport) .....	573-3700
Alcohol and Drug Hotline .....	573-3950
Aging and Adult Services (county) .....	1-800-675-8437
Bay Area Air Quality Control .....	771-6000
Cable TV.....	1-800-945-2288
Chamber of Commerce.....	595-8696
Child Protective Services.....	595-7922
Health Department (county) .....	363-4305
Legal Aid .....	558-0915
PG&E 24-hour help line .....	1-800-743-5000
Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center.....	373-3490
Peninsula Humane Society .....	340-8200
Suicide Prevention.....	368-6655

Visit the Belmont city web site: **[www.belmont.gov](http://www.belmont.gov)**